

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the above-identified patent application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks. Claims 27, 31 and 36 have been amended. Claims 33 and 35 have been cancelled, without prejudice. Claims 27, 31-32, and 36-38 remain in the case.

Claims 27, 31-33, and 35-38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable in view of United States Patent No. 5,487,067 for AUDIO DATA COMMUNICATION, issued January 23, 1996 to Takashi Matsushige, et al. MATSUSHIGE et al. disclose an audio communication system useful for providing and integrating multi-channel audio communication within an audio studio. MATSUSHIGE et al. specifically teach the use of a ring network topology for implementing such communication. Ring networks require an unbroken, circular topology and typically are implemented within a confined geometric area. Moreover, MATSUSHIGE et al. provide a well-known arrangement of master-slave audio devices, masters and slaves being configurable for a particular session.

In contradistinction, Applicant's system provides a series of audio spaces possibly separated by long distances. For example, in her Detailed Description of the Invention, Applicant describes a scenario wherein facilities in Los Angeles, Sidney, Tokyo, and London are linked in accordance with the present invention and listeners therein experience a substantially identical listening experience. Further, a person at a console, a digital audio workstation, or other similar audio signal manipulation device within ANY of the Los Angeles, Sidney, Tokyo, and London facilities may adjust the signal and affect the signal listened to in ALL of the facilities. Additionally, the change in the fader or other control is also transmitted to each of the other facilities where the corresponding fader or other audio control MOVES in synchronism with the movement of the originating control. This process may be effected in ANY of the linked facilities, thereby defining a master-to-master-to-master-to-master relationship of the aforementioned four facilities.

Applicant's linked spaces have been discussed in detail over the unusually lengthy prosecution of this application. In summary, the spaces are configured and equipped so that an identical electrical audio signal to each space produces a substantially identical listening experience in each of the spaces. There is no practical limit to the number of spaces that may be linked nor to the distance between individual linked spaces. The instant claims demand examination within this environment. Such examination has seemingly not been provided heretofore. Applicant respectfully reminds the Examiner that claims must be interpreted in view of the specification.

To reiterate, some of the prime emphases of Applicant's invention as described and claimed include:

- i) a plurality of linked audio spaces having provision to provide substantially identical listening experiences to listeners therein in response to an identical audio signal applied thereto;
- ii) a master-to-master relationship among all the linked audio spaces wherein a modification to the audio signal made at ANY of the linked spaces results in an identical signal change (and subsequent listening experience change) at ALL others of the linked spaces; and
- iii) a linked tactility among the linked spaces whereby a movement of a fader or other audio control results in physical movement of the corresponding control in each of the other linked spaces.

MATSUSHIGE ET AL. NEITHER TEACH NOR SUGGEST ANY OF THESE PROVISIONS. The ring network of MATSUSHIGE et al. cannot practically be used to provide communication between, for example, Sydney and London. Neither does MATSUSHIGE et al. teach or suggest master-to-master-to-master, etc. communication. Further, MATSUSHIGE et al. fails to teach or suggest the "linked tactility" of Applicant's novel system.

The Examiner asserts that MATSUSHIGE et al. "discloses a plurality of typical audio/video studio (Figs. 13-17, col. 23, line 21, col. 25, line) that including [sic] different rooms (i.e., audio spaces such as sound room shows in Fig. 13)." The Examiner is correct in asserting that MATSUSHIGE et al. "discloses a plurality of typical audio/video studios." However, Applicant discloses and claims very specialized audio spaces that are designed, constructed, and configured such that "a listener accommodated in any of said plurality of substantially acoustically identical enclosures so connected receives a substantially identical listening experience to that of a listener accommodated in any other one of said connected substantially acoustically identical enclosures when a substantially identical audio signal" is provided thereto. Applicant's spaces are NOT typical studios but EXTREMELY specialized audio spaces that allow the novel system of the invention to function successfully.

Further, MATSUSHIGE et al. fail to disclose a communication arrangement that allows an unlimited number of spaces with audio devices to be interlinked in a master-to-master-to... -master arrangement as disclosed and claimed by Applicant.

Finally, there is absolutely no teaching or suggestion of linked tactility as disclosed and claimed by Applicant.

Applicant has amended claims 27, 31, and 36 to more clearly recite the novel system of the invention.

Because the prior art of record fails to disclose or suggest Applicant's system, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 27 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over MATSUSHIGE et al. Claims 31 - 32 and 36 depend from claim 27 while claims 37-38 depend from claim 36 and merely recite additional limitations thereto. Consequently, their rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is also respectfully traversed.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that claims 27, 31-32, and 36-38 be allowed and a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,
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